

Interim Forest Management Plan

Property Identifiers

Property Name: Marathon County SIATA

Property Designation or Type: State Ice Age Trail Area (SIATA)

DNR Property Code(s): 9223

Forestry Property Code(s): 3703

Property Location – County: Marathon

Property Acreage: 1663 total across 5 tracts (as mapped in WisFIRS)

Master Plan Date: None

Property Manager: Dawn Bishop

Property Assessment

A. Ecological Landscape description and property context:

The Forest Transition Ecological Landscape lies along the northern border of Wisconsin's Tension Zone, through the central and western part of the state, and supports both northern forests and agricultural areas. The ecological landscape's flora shows characteristics of both northern and southern Wisconsin, corresponding to its position along the northern margins of the Tension Zone. The central portion of the Forest Transition lies primarily on a glacial till plain that was deposited by glaciation between 25,000 and 790,000 years before present. The eastern and western portions are on moraines of the Wisconsin glaciation from 14,000 to 18,000 years before present. Soils are diverse, ranging from sandy loams to loams or shallow silt loams and from poorly drained to well-drained.

The historical vegetation of the Forest Transition Ecological Landscape was primarily northern hardwood and hemlock-hardwood forests. These mesic forests were dominated by sugar maple and eastern hemlock and contained some yellow birch, red pine, and eastern white pine. Currently, 44% of this ecological landscape is forested compared to 86% forested before Euro-American settlement. Forested areas now consist primarily of northern hardwoods and aspen, with smaller amounts of oak and lowland hardwoods. Coniferous and deciduous swamps are scattered throughout the ecological landscape and are often found near the headwaters of streams or associated with lakes in kettle depressions on moraines. The eastern portion of the ecological landscape differs from the remainder as it is still primarily forested and includes numerous ecologically significant areas, some of them extensive.

Small kettle lakes are common on the moraines in the western and eastern parts of the ecological landscape, but there are few lakes in the central glacial till plain. Several streams have their headwaters in the moraines. Many small creeks and rivers flow across the plain including the Big Rib, Little Rib, Trappe, and Wisconsin rivers. A short stretch of the St. Croix River forms the western boundary of this ecological landscape.



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The five Marathon County State Ice Age Trail Area (SIATA) parcels in this IFMP stretch along a 12-mile axis from the northeast to the southwest. The parcels are in three different landtype associations (LTA):

- The **Hatley Moraines** (212Ta03) with a characteristic landform pattern that is rolling collapsed moraine dissected with stream terraces. Soils are predominantly well drained sandy loam over acid loamy sand till.
- The **Marathon Uplands** (212Qd02) with a characteristic landform pattern that is rolling bedrock-controlled erosional surface. Soils are predominantly well drained silt loam over acid loam till, loamy residuum, or igneous/metamorphic bedrock.
- The **Upper Plover River Uplands** (212Ta04) with a characteristic landform pattern that is nearly level outwash plain and stream terraces. Soils are excessively drained and somewhat poorly drained sandy soils with a loamy sand surface over non-calcareous sand outwash, along with very poorly drained nonacid organic soils.

The Town of Harrison SIATA is the northern-most parcel and is almost entirely in the Hatley Moraines LTA with a small number of acres in each of the Marathon Uplands LTA and the Upper Plover River Uplands LTA.

The Town of Plover SIATA is about three miles to the south and is almost entirely in the Hatley Moraines LTA with limited acreage in the Upper Plover River Uplands LTA.

The Town of Easton SIATA is the center parcel and is entirely in the Marathon Uplands LTA.

Northern and Southern Ringle SIATA are the southernmost parcels. About half of each parcel is the Hatley Moraines LTA and half in the Marathon Uplands LTA.

B. General property description – management, adjacent land uses, topography, soils, etc.:

From northeast to southwest, the five parcels in this IFMP are Town of Harrison SIATA, Town of Plover SIATA, Town of Easton SIATA, Northern Ringle SIATA and Southern Ringle SIATA.

The Town of Harrison SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 301) abuts Plover River Fishery Area to the south and extends to the Langlade County line to the east. This parcel covers about 270 acres and is mostly cover typed as northern hardwoods. The topography is fairly rugged with moderately steep slopes with all aspects. There is a developed segment of the IAT in this parcel. The parcel is in a landscape of forests on the more rugged topography with agricultural lands on more level terrain. Farmsteads and houses are scattered throughout the area.

The Town of Plover SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 302) is about 3 miles southwest of the Town of Harrison SIATA. The southeast corner of the parcel touches the Plover River Fishery Area. This SIATA is located between the Eau Claire and Plover rivers. This parcel is nearly 220 acres and is mostly typed as northern hardwoods with some aspen and non-forested cover types. The topography is fairly rugged with moderately steep slopes with all aspects; the more level ground has a couple of farm fields. The IAT has not yet been developed here. The landscape context is similar to that of the Town of Harrison SIATA.

The Town of Easton SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 303) is the centermost of the five SIATA in this IFMP. It too is between the Eau Claire and Plover rivers and is about 3 miles south of the Town of Plover SIATA. It is about 280 acres and has a mix of cover types including northern hardwoods, aspen, red maple, white spruce and swamp



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hardwoods. There is a developed segment of the IAT in this parcel. Topography is more level than the tracts further north, with a couple of swamps and ephemeral streams. There are several moderately steep slopes above the wetlands. The forest on the SIATA continues toward the north and south and is centered on the rougher terrain. About a mile to the east and west, farmland becomes common.

Northern Ringle SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 304) is a little over a mile south of the Town of Easton SIATA. It encompasses about 160 acres of mostly northern hardwoods and smaller amounts of swamp hardwoods, aspen, hemlock and upland brush. The developed segment of the IAT will be rerouted over the next several years. Topography is rugged on the tract. The forest on the SIATA continues toward the north and south and is centered on the rougher terrain. Farmland becomes common, even dominant, east and west of Northern Ringle SIATA.

Southern Ringle SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 305) is about a mile south of Northern Ringle SIATA, a mile north of STH 29 and about 1.5 miles northeast of the namesake Ringle. The SIATA covers about 750 acres. Over half is typed as northern hardwoods, about a third as aspen and the remainder includes red maple and swamp hardwoods. There are several small conifer plantations on the tract. This parcel has a deferral/consultation site that was identified as part of the 2013 rapid ecological assessment. Overall topography is rugged with some gentler areas near the periphery of the property. The forest on the SIATA continues toward the north and south and is centered on the rougher terrain. Farmland becomes common, even dominant, east and west of Northern Ringle SIATA.

C. Current forest types, size classes and successional stages:

Northern Hardwoods (59%) 985 acres; dates of origin 1929-1995; hardwood poles to large sawlogs; major tree species are sugar maple, basswood, red oak, white ash, elm and others

Aspen (23%) 376 acres; dates of origin 1962-2006; seedlings/saplings to hardwood small sawlogs; major tree species are quaking and big-tooth aspen, red oak, basswood, sugar maple, balsam fir and others

Swamp Hardwoods (8%) 132 acres; dates of origin 1920-1967; hardwood poles to hardwood small sawlogs; major tree species are black ash, red maple, balsam fir, elm, hemlock and yellow birch

Red Maple (4%) 69 acres; dates of origin 1947-1968; hardwood poles to hardwood small sawlogs; major tree species are red maple, yellow birch, basswood, red oak, balsam fir, aspen and sugar maple

White Spruce (1%) 18 acres; dates of origin 1940 and 1972; softwood small sawlogs; major tree species are white spruce, aspen, balsam fir and red pine

Red Pine (1%) 10 acres; plantation; date of origin 1972; softwood small sawlogs; major tree species are red pine, red oak, red maple and white ash

Hemlock (<1%) 6 acres; date of origin 1947; softwood small sawlogs; major tree species are hemlock, red maple, white pine and yellow birch

Non-forested cover types (4%) 67 acres; include farmland, upland and lowland grassland, upland and lowland brush, rights-of-way

D. NHI: Endangered, threatened, Special Concern species, Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN):

One state threatened animal and one special concern plant has been documented on or near these five SIATA.

E. Wildlife Action Plan Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA), Important Bird Areas (IBA):

None of the five tracts are in COA or IBA.



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F. Significant cultural or archeological features:

No archeological or historic sites have been identified in the state database.

G. Invasive species:

Known species include scattered buckthorn, honeysuckle, spotted knapweed and common tansy.

H. Existing State Natural Areas (SNA) designations/natural community types limited in the landscape:

None

I. Primary public uses:

The primary purpose of State Ice Age Trail Areas is to permanently protect segments of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (IAT) and the natural resources along it for present and future public use and enjoyment. The purpose, use and management of the IAT are found in NR 1.29. Four of the five SIATA in this IFMP have a completed segment of the Ice Age Trail. The Ice Age Trail is primarily an off-road hiking and backpacking trail that provides excellent opportunities for sightseeing, wildlife viewing and bird watching. Hunting and trapping opportunities vary with individual parcel, depending on SIATA size and trail configuration. Those opportunities, including maps and other information, can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/>, keyword "state park hunting."

J. Biotic Inventory Status:

Two (Southern Ringle and Northern Ringle) of the five SIATA were inventoried for natural communities, breeding birds and rare plants in 2013 as part of a statewide rapid ecological assessment of SIATAs.

K. Deferral/consultation area designations:

There is one 186-acre consultation site that is located on the Southern Ringle tract: Wausau Paper (IAT01).

IFMP components

Management Objectives:

1. Promote large blocks of larger diameter, older hardwoods, especially northern hardwoods. Maintain a hemlock component where it currently exists, and promote hemlock regeneration where practical.
2. Retain sufficient canopy closure to maintain suitable habitat for forest interior species, including birds.
3. Maintain structural complexity for dependent animal species, unless standing snags and legacy trees pose a safety risk.
4. Encourage and allow the accumulation of coarse woody debris, unless it poses a safety risk.
5. Identify and protect ephemeral ponds.
6. Gradually convert conifer plantations to hardwood-dominated stands.
7. Where feasible, convert aspen and red maple stands to longer-lived hardwood species, especially northern hardwoods.
8. Plant or allow to convert agricultural land, upland brush, and old fields to a variety of northern hardwood species
9. Monitor and treat non-native invasive species where feasible, especially high priority species (like garlic mustard) and those that could affect the regeneration of desirable tree species.



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10. In the event of land acquisition or exchange, the new acreage will be managed according to these objectives.

Property Prescriptions:

1. **Northern hardwoods** - Maintain and expand blocks of northern hardwoods using uneven-aged management with extended rotations. Blocks of older stands, including the Wausau Paper consultation site (IAT01), may be considered for managed old growth. Maintain sufficient canopy closure to meet the needs of forest interior animal species.
2. **Hemlock** - For regeneration, conduct only the first stage of a patch shelterwood harvest centered on mature, seed-producing trees. Maintain >70% canopy closure.
3. **Ephemeral ponds** - Follow water quality BMP. Maintain canopy cover surrounding ephemeral ponds. Do not fell trees, pile slash or skid into or through ephemeral ponds. Avoid soil compaction around ephemeral ponds.
4. **Aspen** - Where feasible, convert aspen stands to longer-lived species, especially northern hardwoods. Conversion can be passive or active. In areas where conversion is not feasible, small even-aged regeneration harvests may be considered.
5. **Red maple** - Where feasible, convert red maple stands to northern hardwoods. In areas where conversion is not feasible, even-aged or uneven-aged harvest methods may be considered.
6. **Swamp hardwoods** - Use passive management for water quality, and for headwaters protection, except possibly for salvage in some cases.
7. **Upland conifer** - Even-aged management with periodic thinning and an extended rotation age will be used in plantations to slowly convert them to a mix of tree species where pine will continue to be a component of the stand.
8. **Upland non-forested stands (brush, grass, farmland)** - Plant to long-lived northern hardwoods tree species.
9. **All stands** - Retain standing dead snags and reserve/legacy trees as groups or individuals throughout the property within harvested stands. Encourage and allow the accumulation of coarse woody debris. Manage for invasive species as needed.
10. **Ice Age Trail, associated corridor and dispersed camping areas** - Maintain an aesthetic buffer within 50 feet of the Ice Age Trail; buffers may be larger along some segments of the IAT, such as in compartment 301. Hazard trees may be considered for removal from or felled and left as coarse woody debris within the buffer zone as part of timber sales. Follow IFMP trail guidance and Parks timber harvest guidelines (both available on the DNR intranet) to avoid impacts from timber management to established and proposed segments of the IAT and dispersed camping sites.
11. **Salvage of trees** damaged by storms, fire, insects or disease will be evaluated by an integrated team led by Parks staff. The decision whether to salvage or not will be based on the management goal of increasing coarse woody debris and snag components while considering visitor safety, fire suppression, forest pest control and product values.

Summary of Public Involvement and Comments Received:

No comments were received between April 16 and April 30, 2018

Maps (Optional)

- a. Locator map of the SIATA addressed in this IFMP
- b. Cover type map for Town of Harrison SIATA
- c. Cover type map for Town of Plover SIATA
- d. Cover type map for Town of Easton SIATA
- e. Cover type map for Northern Ringle SIATA
- f. Cover type map for Southern Ringle SIATA



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PREPARED BY:

W. B. Shgo 5-8-18
Property Manager Date

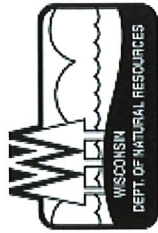
APPROVED:

[Signature] 5/10/18
Area Program Supervisor Date

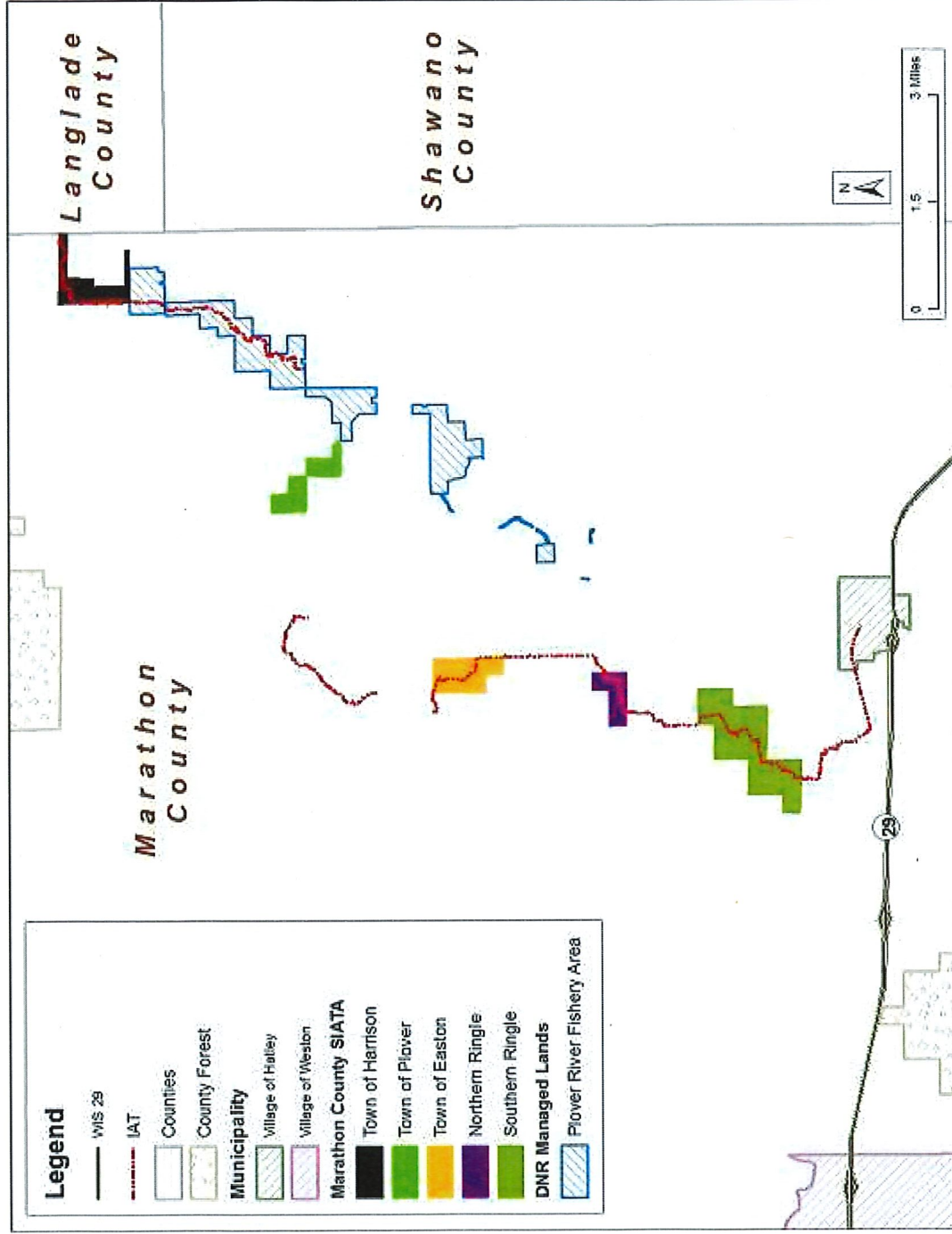
REVIEWED BY:

[Signature] 6/7/18
Forester Date

Carol L. 6/11/18
District Ecologist Date

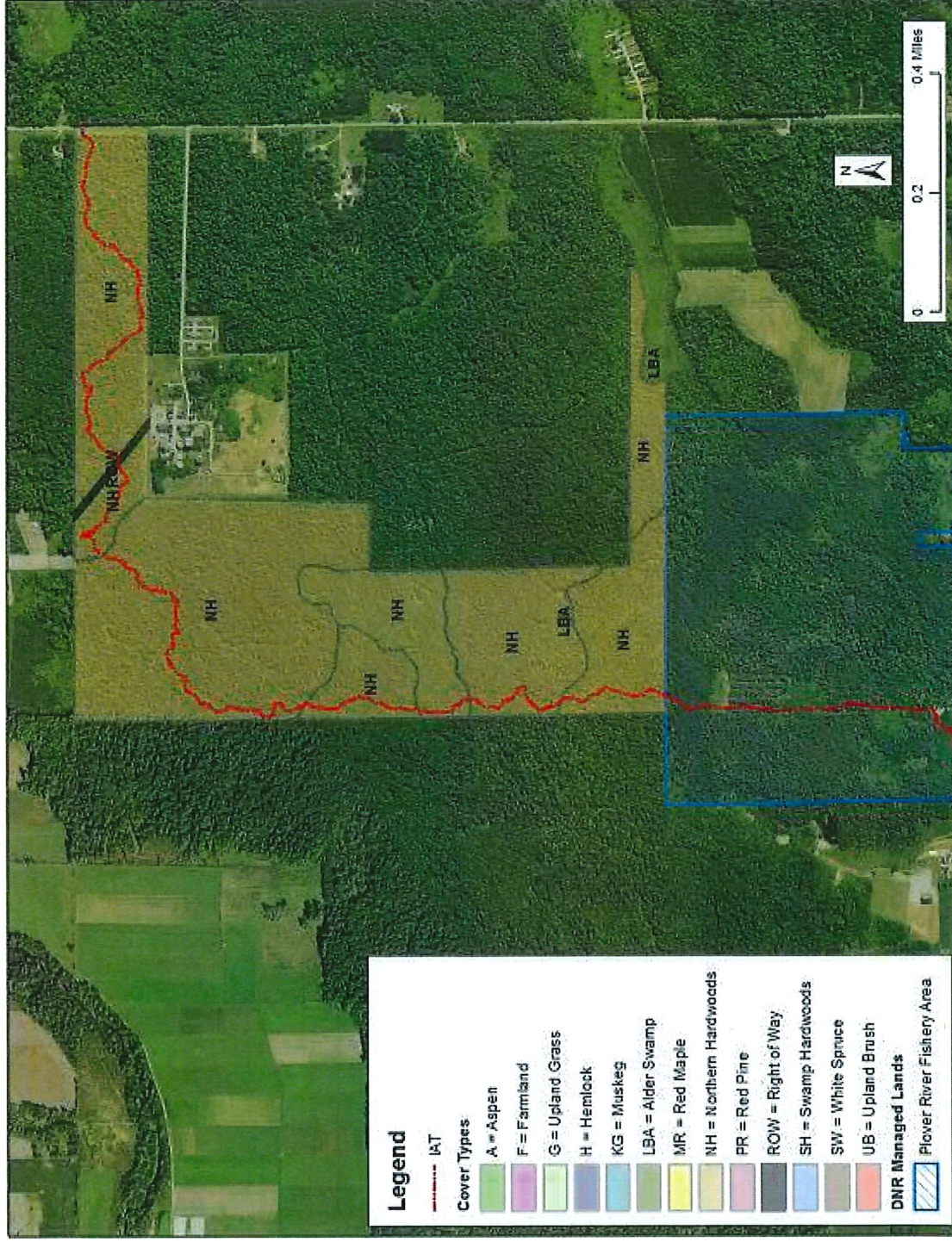


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a. Locator map of the SIATA addressed in this IFMP

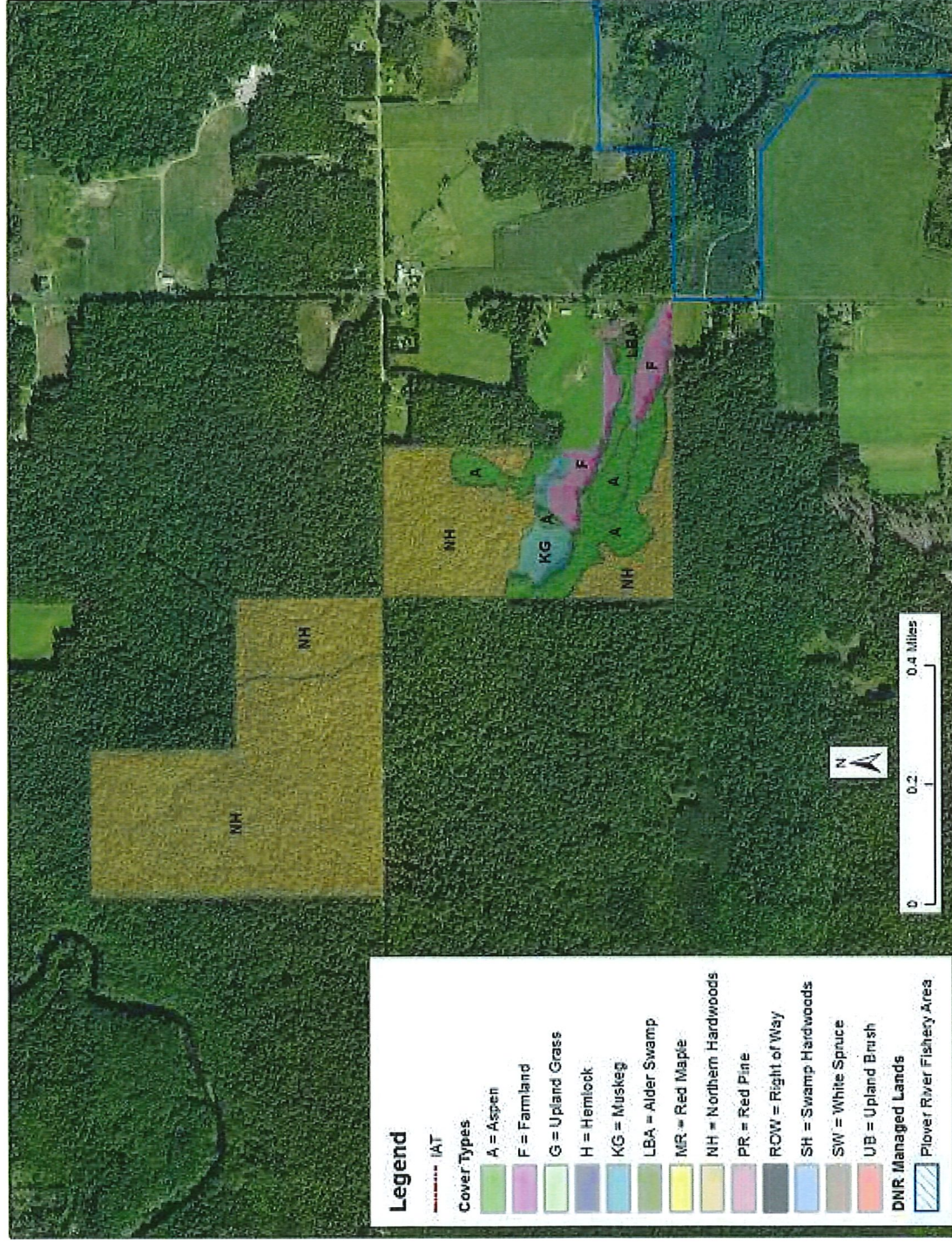
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b. Cover type map for Town of Harrison SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 301)



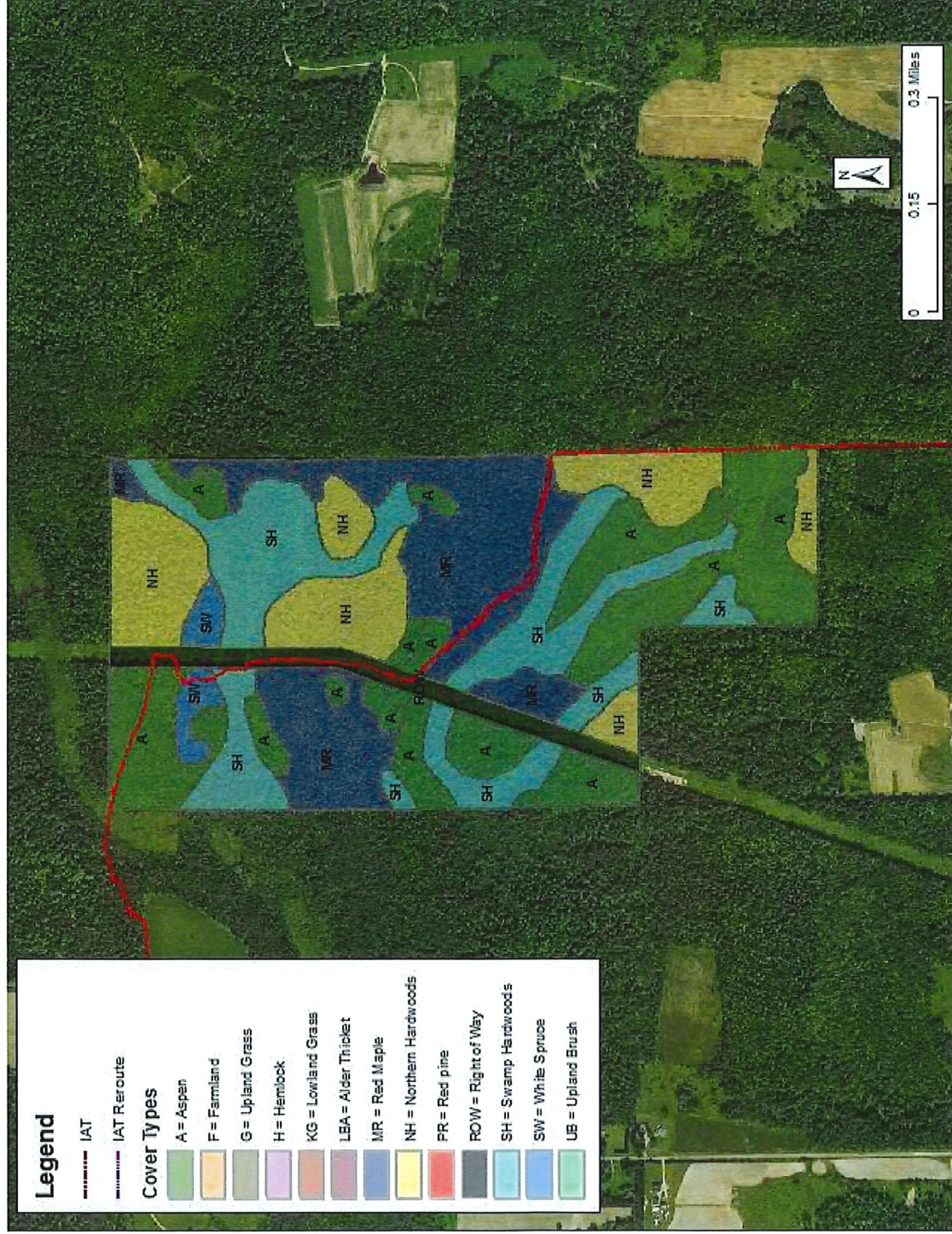
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c. Cover type map for Town of Plover SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 302)

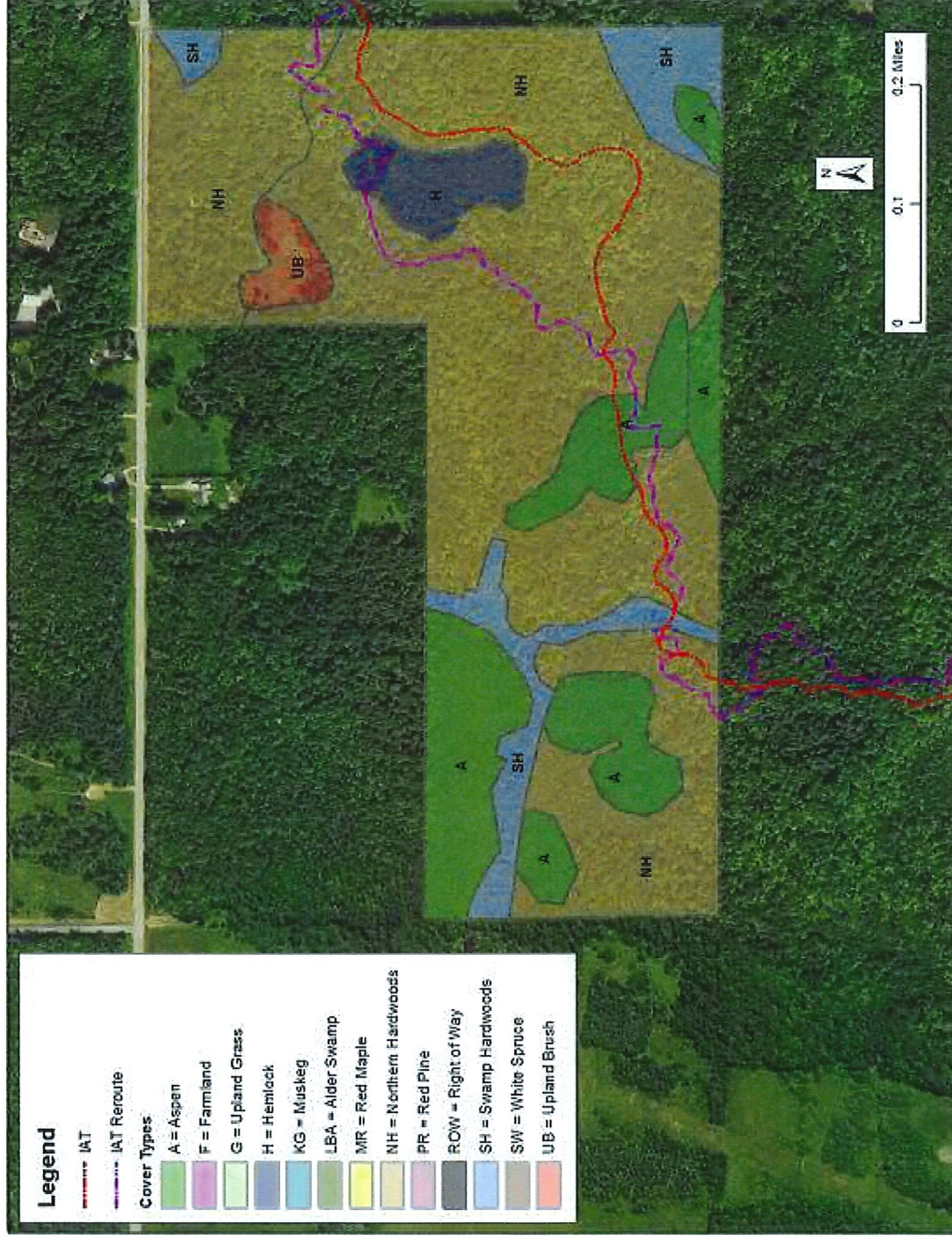


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d. Cover type map for Town of Easton SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 303)

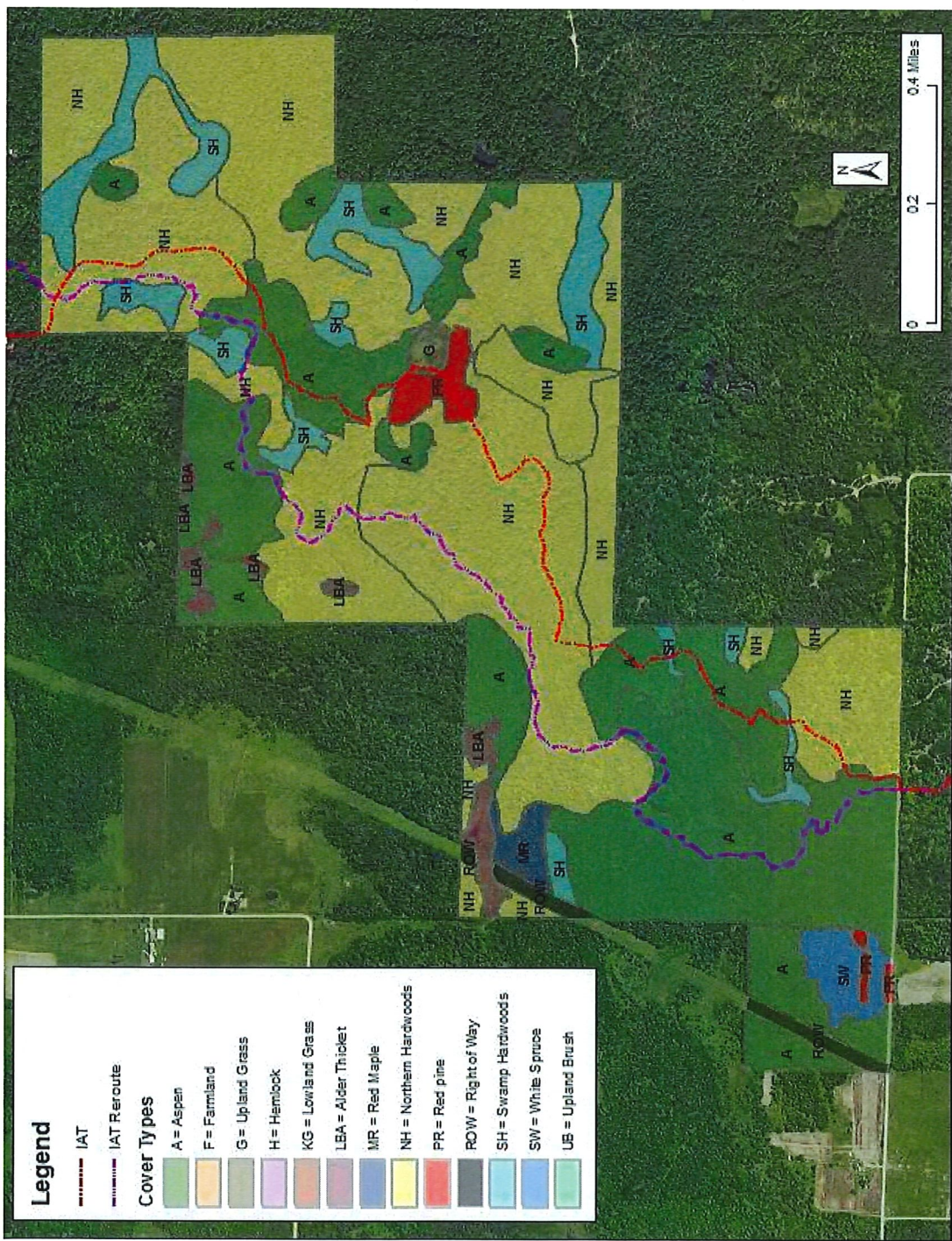
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e. Cover type map for Northern Ringier SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 304)



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f. Cover type map for Southern Ringle SIATA (WisFIRS Compartment 305)